

# VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

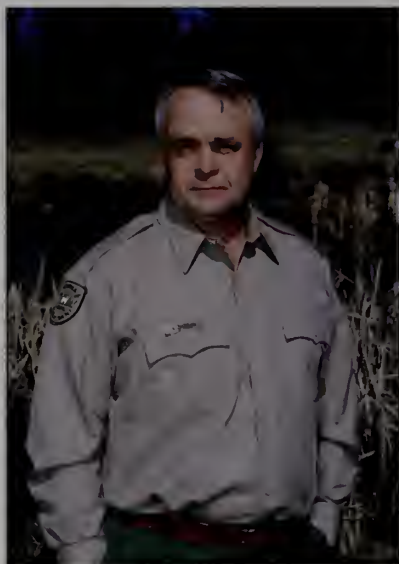
MAY 1997 ONE DOLLAR





## Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr



Lee Walker

## Thinking About the Ideal Outdoor Gift for Mother's Day?

A few years ago the question was asked, "why aren't there as many women as men participating in backpacking, canoeing, shooting sports, archery, fishing and wilderness survival?" In a world where men and women have many of the same recreational interests, we all thought there must be some answers.

Certainly one reason is that women have not traditionally been given the opportunities and they have not been encouraged to learn about the outdoors the way young men have been. But that is changing.

Here in Virginia, with our "Virginia Women in the Outdoors" program, we are part of that positive change. Our program provides a great opportunity for women of all ages to experience for themselves why some people can be so passionate about their outdoor pursuits.

Our program includes elements of the international effort, known as "Becoming An Outdoors-Woman" (BOW), as well as additional opportunities provided by our staff. BOW is a large workshop with broad interests, and it attracts a wide-ranging group of women for its dynamic three-day weekends. Interest areas include basic camping, fishing, boating, hunting, basic firearms safety, and much

more. The focus of each weekend workshop is to learn outdoor skills in a comfortable non-threatening atmosphere, and during a BOW weekend women can get to know others who are just as interested in the outdoors as they are. People of all ages and vocations attend, and the overall response has been summed up by the participant who said, "this is a program whose time has come."

In addition to the BOW weekends, the Virginia Women in the Outdoors workshops offer seminar sessions in specialized interests, such as turkey hunting, fly fishing, deer hunting or orienteering.

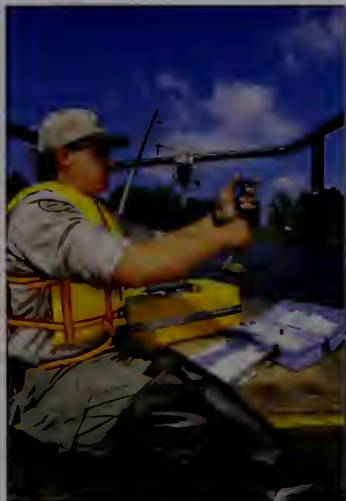
The next open classes are scheduled for September, when we plan to offer the deer and turkey hunting weekends at the Smith Mountain 4-H Center. Any of the workshops would make a wonderful Mother's Day gift for the women in your life. And don't overlook the daughters and granddaughters. Several BOW Workshop Gift Certificates were given this past Christmas, to the delight of the recipients.

For more information, please see our Home Page at [www.state.va.us/~dgif/index.htm](http://www.state.va.us/~dgif/index.htm), or call us at (757) 253-4180. We look forward to seeing you in the field.

### Mission Statement

*To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.*

# VIRGINIA WILDLIFE



*A small portable water quality test kit should be part of every pondowners' management program.*



*The popularity of catfish tournaments continues to grow in Virginia. Catfish thrive in the state's tidal rivers, but they also do well in managed ponds, as outlined on pages 14-17. In the tidal rivers catfish can be found even in areas with salinity up to three percent and sometimes higher.*

## Features

*Cover: Red-Tailed hawk, photo ©Dwight Dyke*

*Back cover: photo ©Dwight Dyke*

- 4 **A Royal Pastime** by Dwight Dyke  
Falconry is not as prevalent as it once was, but the passion for these magnificent birds and this time-intensive practice has not diminished for a committed few.
- 9 **"Oh Shenandoah," Oh Smallmouth** by Harry Murray  
Harry Murray gives us an approach to this summer's fishing trip to a famous Virginia river. We review Murray's newest book on page 28.
- 14 **Farm Ponds** by David Hart  
Farm ponds can be wonderful resources, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will tell you how to manage yours for good fishing.
- 18 **River Chicken** by Michelle Scala  
This author is truly a Virginia Woman in the Outdoors, and here she shows us why we all need to sample Virginia's catfishing. Preferably as soon as possible.
- 21 **White Perch Fishing** by Gerald Almy  
A good game fish that often is not given its due, the white perch might provide the kind of action anglers are really looking for.
- 24 **A Refuge From Flight** by Emily Grey  
Here is Saxis Wildlife Management Area, land that is managed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries on the Eastern Shore. At Saxis the Department offers great fishing, birding and wildlife watching.

## May Journal

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| 28 News    | 32 May Afield |
| 30 Habitat | 33 Recipes    |
| 31 Safety  | 34 Photo Tips |

*Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources*





A R



# oy al Pastime

Story and photos  
by Dwight Dyke

Falconry is an old and revered sport, one that once was reserved for kings. It's easy to understand why. Falconry is not a sport that is entered into lightly. Falconers do not tame or domesticate the raptors they raise or capture. They simply learn to communicate with these monarchs of the heavens in order to share the rhythm of their lives for a time.

Falconry today is one of the most rigorous and demanding of the hunting sports. One does not simply become a falconer. A two-year apprenticeship is required of the aspiring falconer, and a certified falconer

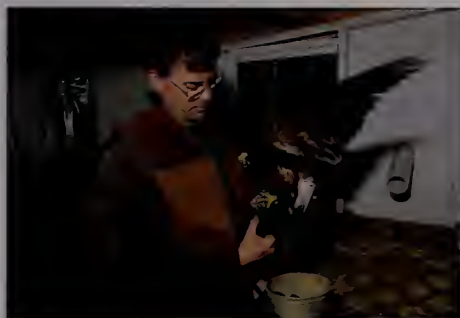


(Far left) The Gry/Merlin is a hybrid of the Gryfalcon and the Merlin falcon.

(Left inset) Ron Frye with his peregrine falcon.

(Above) Lance and Dr. Jill Morrow with their red-tailed hawk, Cookie. A hood is often placed on a raptor during transport to keep the bird relaxed and calm. Bells are attached to the feet or the tail feathers to alert the falconer of the raptor's location. With its keen eyesight and hunting skills, the raptor often directs the falconer to the best area for game to be flushed. Falcons soar and catch their prey in midair, while hawks will perch in trees until their prey is in an open area.

(Top and left) Birds of prey require constant and meticulous care and attention. Not only do they have specialized feeding and housing requirements, but they also require constant handling and training to maintain an amicable and willing relationship with their human companions. These birds can never be "tamed," and many falconers often release their native hawks back into the wild after one or more seasons of hunting. Here John Moore works with his Harris hawk.









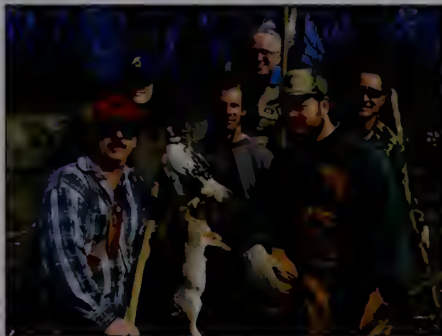
*(Left)* Harris hawks are a popular species used in falconry, and many are locally bred and raised specifically for the sport.

*(Bottom far left)* Jeff Dennison and apprentice Ray Balut install a radio transmitter on Jeff's Harris hawk. This will help to recover the adult hawk if it decides to venture off.

*(Bottom center and right)* In the sport of falconry, the traditional hunting roles are often reversed. The raptors become the skilled hunters waiting for the prey to be flushed. The falconers become the hunting companions, stomping through thickets and brush to raise rabbits or birds for the chase.

*(Below left to right)* Lance Morrow, Dr. Jill Morrow, Mark Kilby, Kent Knowls, Jim Hill, and James Bloodgett take a break from rabbit hunting with Lance's red-tailed hawk.

*(Below right)* Gry/Merlin falcon on a pigeon. Becoming a falconer involves a serious commitment to both the sport and the raptor. A two-year apprenticeship approved by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is required under the mentorship of a certified falconer. For more information, contact the Virginia Falconers' Association, c/o Tim Markwood, Sec/Treasurer, 11 Oakdale Court, Sterling, VA 20165, or Don Schwab, Virginia Falconry Coordinator, VDGIF, P.O. Box 847, Suffolk, VA 23439.



must serve as mentor and teacher during that time. In addition, tests must be taken and facilities for housing a raptor must be approved. And then, of course, there is the royal bird.

Red-tailed hawks are among the most popular of raptors chosen by falconers in Virginia, although the Harris hawk, a species native to the Southwest, is bred in the state specifically for falconry. Peregrine falcons are also used, as are Cooper's hawks and northern goshawks. Surprisingly, some falconers even favor great-horned owls. Nevertheless, whatever raptor is chosen by the falconer, a serious relationship is entered into the moment the hawk, falcon, or owl becomes a part of a falconer's life. It's a rather one-sided commitment. A bird of prey will not stoop to parrot chatter or chicken scratch. A raptor lives to hunt, and the human being who embarks upon a relationship with such an animal must do



the same. The falconer must learn to participate in the hunt with his bird by reversing the roles of the traditional hunter and companion. The raptor is the hunter in this sport, perched high up in a tree, while the human takes to the brush, raising rabbits or grouse for the raptor to take on the wing or the ground.

The sport demands that a delicate balance be maintained between falconer and raptor, one of respect and understanding. If the balance tips, the outcome is simple: the raptor disappears into the heavens. Even the best of falconers sometimes lose their birds. Hunting raptors must be weighed in daily, for a bird given too much to eat will more likely decide



to wheel to the sky and freedom. Since raptors are known as solitary hunters, to train them to hunt cooperatively is a tremendous accomplishment. To teach such an animal to hunt with a man or woman is nothing short of remarkable.

Perhaps that is why falconers such as John Moore, Lance Morrow, Jeff Dennison and Ron Frye of the Virginia Falconers' Association put so much time and effort into their sport. In falconry exists a rare relationship between the wild and the civilized; the earth and the heavens, and those who participate in it know the brief but thrilling connection between the two. They would have it no other way. □

On May 11, 1997 the Virginia Falconers' Association will be hosting an "Introduction to Falconry" seminar in Northern Virginia. For information and an application please call Lance Morrow (703) 941-6917.

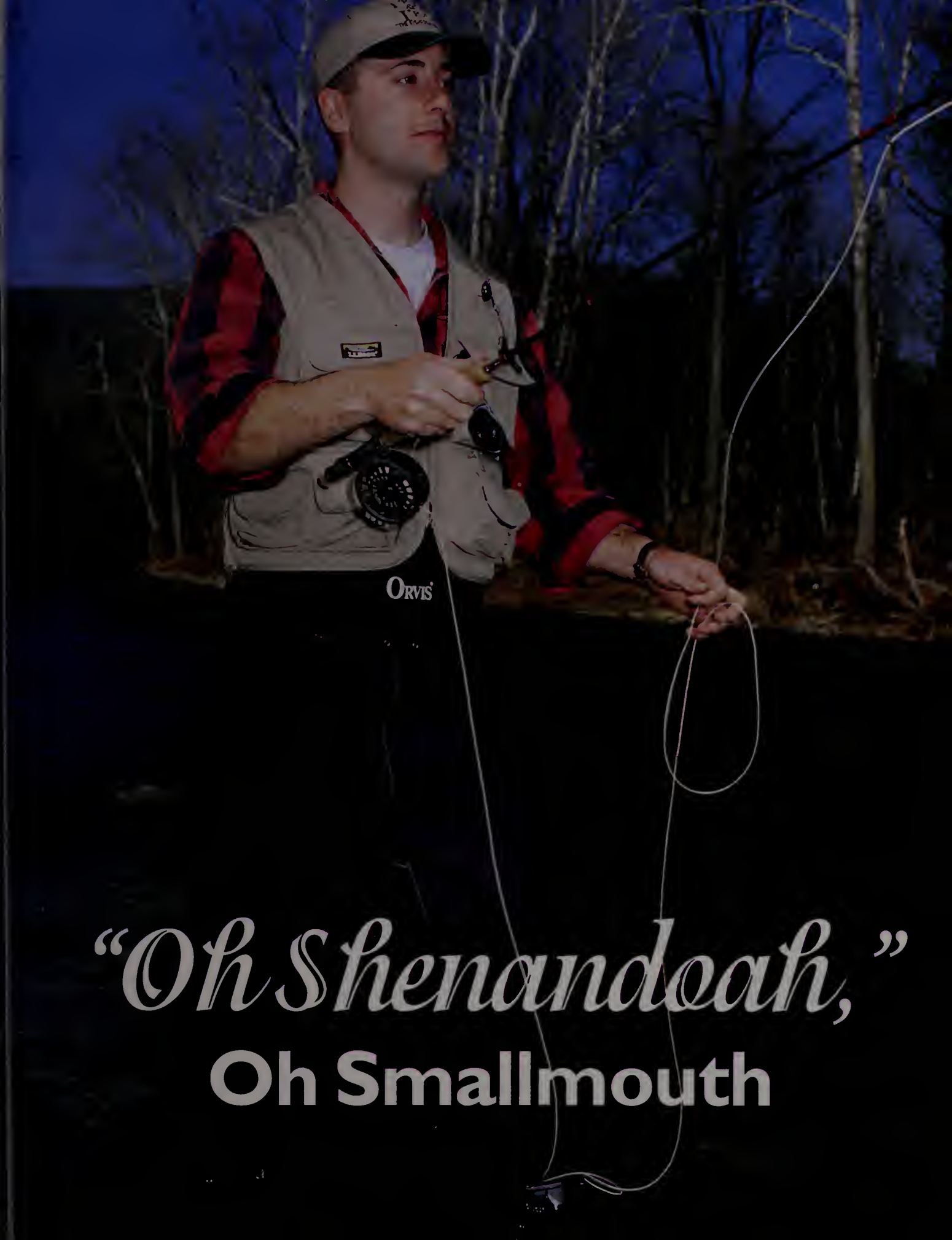
*Dwight Dyke is an outdoor photographer residing in Hanover County. His work appears regularly in calendars and magazines throughout the country.*



(Left) Peregrine falcon. (Above) Cooper's hawk.

The falconry seasons are published in the Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Regulations. Raptors are not hunted in the spring and summer months, since they are going through molting at the time and are also sorely tempted to fly to freedom when soaring in warm thermals that can whisk them hundreds of miles away in a short time.





*“Oh Shenandoah,”*  
**Oh Smallmouth**



by Harry Murray

Many serious anglers feel fly fishing should provide them with a great amount of fun with enough challenges built into it to keep them on their toes. This is beautifully exemplified by the smallmouth bass fishing in Virginia's Shenandoah River drainage.

The Shenandoah's great forte is her profuse numbers of smallmouths distributed uniformly throughout the 150 miles of her North and South Forks and main stem. These bass take flies quite readily enabling a beginning angler to easily reap the rewards of fly fishing early in his career. This is great for his ego, as well as for those of us who have played the game longer and have been humiliated by many fish in diverse locations. Before you

assume this is "pushover fishing," I must quickly add that there are enough challenges in this smallmouth fishing to thoroughly test your angling skills and powers of observation and deduction—the Shenandoah's large bass did not get that way by being stupid.

Good action usually begins by mid-May. The North Fork of the Shenandoah River carries only about one-fifth of the volume of the South Fork, thus providing better





only minutes away from my fly shop, reminds me tremendously of the Gallatin River at Gallatin Gateway in Montana.

With this type water and knowing the smallmouth's affinity to strong currents I'm sure you will not be surprised when I tell you that many of the flies and tactics we use are quite comparable to those used for trout in similar waters. If you are an accomplished trout angler you are well along the way to completely mastering the Shenandoah. However,

there are a few adaptations of these trout tactics which will broaden your smallmouth horizons and, in some cases, provides easier fishing than we periodically confront on the medium size trout streams.

The North Fork abounds with large nymphs such as hellgrammites and stoneflies. I clearly remember when I was a youngster I could seine enough hellgrammites in the riffles in a few minutes to fish with all day.

This bountiful food supply and the North Fork's tumbling riffles and easily wadable runs prompt me to start with nymphs in mid-May. Some of the most consistent patterns include the Bitch Creek Nymph, Murray's Hellgrammite and Brooks' Dark Stonefly Nymph all in sizes 4, 6, and 8. The heavy nature of the water lends itself well to the upstream dead drift approach. This tactic enables me to easily get my nymphs to the bottom where the bass are holding and to fish the short line needed for strike detection.

As the North Fork flows past the Massanutten Mountain in the historical Seven Bends around the town of Woodstock, many beautiful streamer runs are created. The riffles and runs are loaded with sculpin minnows and madtoms. Flies such as Shenk's Black

Sculpin, Whitlock's Sculpin and the Spuddler produce good fishing in sizes 4 and 6. I like to fish these down and across stream just where the riffles dump into the main part of the pools. A very slow line-hand stripping action which encourages the streamer to swim enticingly along the bottom is usually the best play. A



*All East Coast anglers who love fly-fishing should try the Shenandoah River. A view of the North Fork of the Shenandoah is pictured above left. Author Harry Murray recommends you try the Spuddler (above, top) which was successful first with western trout but has proven to be highly respected as a smallmouth streamer. The Marabou Muddler, the Silver Outcast, Shenk's Sculpin and Whitlock's Sculpin are also great streamers for fishing the Shenandoah River. Photos by Harry Murray.*

fishing earlier than her larger sister river. The North Fork averages 150 feet wide in the vicinity of the rural village of Edinburg where several of her main feeders contribute their input. Its composition is the basic pool-riffle-pool makeup often associated with the larger trout streams of the Catskills or the medium size trout streams of the Rockies. In fact, a favorite section where I normally start my season,

faster retrieve often pulls the fly up too far off the stream bottom and seemingly lacks appeal to the bass. I use a floating line with a 9-foot leader tapered down to 2X for most of this streamer fishing. However, if I am fishing very heavy runs or if there is an excessive amount of water in the river, I find I can take more large fish by going to a fast sinking tip line with a six foot leader. This rig simplifies my needs for keeping the Sculpins close to the stream bottom.

As early summer approaches, the South Fork of the Shenandoah comes into its own with good action around the town of Luray. This river is characterized by its limestone ledges lying perpendicular to the main currents. Some of the ledges protrude from the surface forming miniature dams one to two hundred feet long across the river. These are often encased with rich aquatic grass beds by mid-summer. Some short ledges form natural stream deflectors shunting the currents to gorge deep runs and pockets against banks and islands. Others function almost like a snow fence, enabling high spring floods to deposit its sand and cobblestones downstream immediately below them.

This diverse array of perfect smallmouth habitat is beautifully sculptured between the majestic peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains on one side and the heavily timbered ridges of Massanutten Mountain on the other.

The same tactics discussed earlier for the North Fork work well on the South Fork. Additionally, the fine fishing can be experienced with chub and shiner minnow imitations.

The pools between the ledges range from 100 to 500 yards long providing perfect habitat for chub minnows. Shenk's White Streamer and Murray's Cream Strymph both in size 4 and 6 fished down and across stream in these areas have given me many memorable days.

Shiners represent the greatest single minnow population in the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. These are schooling minnows so when you find one, you find hundreds. I have

often had students in my small-mouth bass fly fishing schools make very impressive catches of bass by encouraging them to fish around the grass beds with a size 6 Waterman's Silver Outcast. The bass are attracted to these areas by the profusion of minnows and one frequently sees the minnows splashing through the edges of the grass as they flee a marauding bass. Even if this "chase" is not observed, one can make great catches by casting the streamer tight



Harry Murray

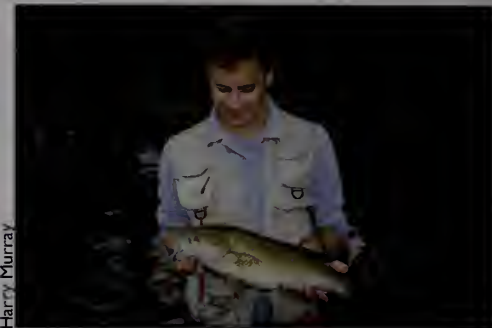
to the grass and stripping it out over the deeper water close by. Experience has shown me that I make my best catches within 10 feet of the grass beds, so I seldom retrieve the fly further out before picking it up to recast it to a new spot about a foot away from the last target. Be ready for the strike the second your fly touches the water because this is the hot spot and often the bass are right there.

As summer unfolds both branches as well as the main stem of the Shenandoah River begin producing excellent top water smallmouth fishing.

Poppers such as the Shenandoah Damsel Popper, and Shenandoah Chartreuse Slider in size 6 and hair bugs like the Shenandoah Hair Popper and Tapply Bug in sizes 6 and 10 are all very good on this river. One of my favorite ways to fish top water here is to either wade or float downstream parallel to the bank a comfortable casting distance out and cast my bugs tight in against the shore. Smallmouths simply do not like real bright light but will move out along the shady side of the river—that is, the east side in the morning and the west side after

noon—and feed aggressively all day.

Bug-play, or I should say the lack of bug-play, is very important. Frequently, the bass prefer a very slow bug action on the surface. How slow? If you are in doubt of the rate at which your working your bug, slow it down. This in itself will often double the number of strikes you get. I like to impart just enough action to my surface bug to make it look alive and then let it drift natu-



Harry Murray

*Wading possibilities are plentiful in the Shenandoah and its tributaries (left) and sometimes you can find the big smallmouths rumored to be in the area (above). The summertime top water fishing in the Shenandoah is another example of Virginia's great fisheries. (Below right) Murray displays a catch that makes an angler glad he went fishing.*

rally with the current about five feet then jiggle it again and let it drift again. Notice, I said "with the current!" This is distinctly different than one imparting no action to the bug, but carelessly allowing the current to pull on the line or leader which produces a very unnatural and apparently unappealing action to the bug. This sick-swinging bug will bring few strikes from sizeable bass. The desired action can best be achieved by casting down and across stream tight to the cover and carefully mending the line before the unnatural dragging action is produced by the play of the current between you and the bug.

An offshot of an old trout dry fly tactic has converted many so-so days into memorable experiences for me. I seriously doubt that when Mr. Hewitt developed his skating technique for the wise trout of the Neversink River in New York that he ever considered a reb from Virginia would use this ploy to lure



smallmouth bass to the surface. However, it works. Fantastically!

Mr. Hewitt's Neversink Skaters always produced a few small bass for me, but it was a trip to Montana over twenty years ago that showed me how I could lure the larger bass. There Joe Brooks introduced me to the large heavily hackled dries used to mimic the giant stoneflies on the Yellowstone River. Not only did these patterns catch the beautiful browns on the Yellowstone River for me, but they proved the answer for exciting my Shenandoah River smallmouths. The two best flies—with a few modern adaptations—proved to be the Improved Sofapil-low and the Improved Golden Stonefly in size 8.

From mid-summer until mid-September I like to fish these in the tails of the pools and over the deep cuts between the ledges.

The manner in which I fish these oversized dries is derived from watching the acrobatic leaps of the smallmouths as they catapult skyward to capture the elusive damselflies. These insects buzz across the river brushing the water's surface in almost a teasing manner—and yes, the bass capture many of them. I've often landed nice smallmouths so stuffed with damselflies that I wondered why they even took my fly.

In order to impart this "skating action" to my flies I like to work downstream, delivering my fly down and across stream at about a 45 degree angle to the current. Keeping my casts between 30 to 50 feet permits the best fly control. As soon as the fly touches the water I lift my rod arm up to about 45 degrees above the stream and simultaneously strip in all of the slack with my line hand. This enables me to dance the flies across the surface in two to three feet bursts by simply pivoting the extended rod.

This skating technique brings some jolting strikes and some nerve-shattering misses. To master the former just don't hit him like a tarpon or you may break him off on the strike. The showy misses are his fault, not yours. His aim was simply off, or as Marinaro used to say "you disappointed him by moving the fly." Most of these misses can be converted into landed fish. Give the bass about a minute or two to get back to his feeding station, then drop your fly several feet above and beyond him and with less vigor than the first drift, play it over him in an enticing manner. Crash!

September and October are "big fish" months on the Shenandoah. Almost every year my students take their largest fish at this time.

Up until mid-September top water bugs, nymphs and streamers all produce well, with the anglers preferred approach rather than the bass' whim dictating the tactics. Late in September as the water temperature drops, nymphs and streamers give the best action. However, this can be fantastic. Very little of the Shenandoah drainage has water

over five feet deep in the falls so when the bass seek out the deepest pockets and pools they are well within reach of our flies.

Often in the fall I feel I am almost cheating—almost that is—by taking advantage of this mini-migration of the bass to the deeper runs. One of my regular haunts is only about the size of a tennis court holding water about five feet deep. It is nestled between two ledges lying perpendicular to the flow on the South Fork of the Shenandoah close to Edinburg. It is not at all unusual to land 20 to 30 large bass here by methodically fishing the Murray's Hellgrammite upstream dead drift among the crevices. Fun!

The basic fly tackle for the Shenandoah River system is a 9-foot fly rod which balances with a number 7 or 8 line. Much of the fishing is done with a floating weight forward bass bug tapered line, however, a fast sinking tip line is definitely helpful in the spring and fall or whenever one desires to fish the deepest fast runs. A lightweight durable, single action reel which will hold the complete fly line and 100 feet of backing is ideal. Nine foot leaders tapered down to 0X to 3X cover the floating line needs and six foot leaders at 1X and 3X are best on the sinking tip lines.

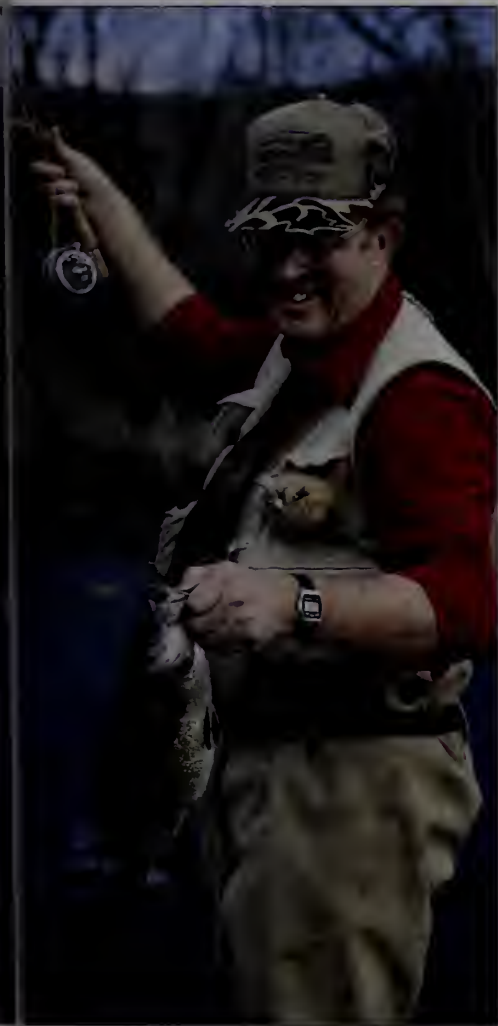
There is an abundance of excellent access on this river system for either floating or wading. Whichever mode you choose, I think you will find the Shenandoah River a smallmouth stream you will thoroughly enjoy and will want to fish often. It can truly be challenging, it definitely is rewarding, but most of all it is simply a tremendous amount of fun to fish. □

---

*Harry Murray is a freelance writer who teaches fishing and fly tying in Edinburg, Virginia. See the Virginia Wildlife review of Murray's most recent book on page 28.*

---

*Editor's note: Excellent maps showing much of the North and South Forks of the Shenandoah River with roads and access points are available for \$5.95 and maps of the complete Shenandoah drainage are available for \$14.95, plus \$2 shipping fee from the Shenandoah Publishing Co., P.O. Box 156, Edinburg, Virginia 22824.*



# FARM PONDS

*Fishing on farm ponds can be rewarding if the pond is managed correctly. VDGIF can tell you how.*

Laremouth bass: Mark Giovannetti





by David Hart

Where's the best fishing in Virginia? Often, it's in small, privately-owned ponds. The state record crappie, a 4 pound, 10 ounce whopper was pulled from a private pond. The state record sunfish, a 4 pound, 12 ounce monster, was caught from a farm pond, as well. Every year, private ponds produce hundreds of trophy-sized fish in Virginia.

Of course, it's not just first-rate fishing that make private ponds so appealing. Many landowners build them solely as an addition to the view out the living room or kitchen window and others use them as a backyard swimming hole. Some build ponds to attract wildlife and others create them to give livestock relief from Virginia's summer heat. But without a doubt, the main purpose of Virginia's estimated 80,000 ponds is for one thing: fishing. Not every pond that has fish, however, has good quality fishing.

Why are some of these little bodies of water so productive?

Controlled access and decreased harvest mortality are big factors, but most important, said Fisheries Biologist Ed Steinkoenig, is proper management. Steinkoenig, along with fellow biologists Dean Fowler and John Copeland are putting the finishing touches on a booklet titled *Management of Virginia Ponds for Fishing*. It will be filled with detailed information and will help pondowners improve the quality of their ponds.

"Landowners first have to decide what they want from their pond before they build it or before they try to manage it," he said. "Is it going to be a swimming hole, a water source for livestock, or for fishing? Is it going to be a multi-use pond? If one of it's primary purposes is for livestock, then landowners should consider building two ponds and use one exclusively for livestock watering. Cattle tend to trample the banks and muddy up the water. That's not good for either fishing or swimming."

John Weidlein, a Loudoun County resident, didn't need to consider the effects of livestock, but he did have to think about his family's desires before building the second of two ponds on his property.

"We primarily wanted the second pond to be similar to the first one," said Weidlein. "The first one, which we built back in the 70's, was designed for aesthetics and swimming, although we wanted some fishing opportunities, too. The second one, which we built in 1992, was designed for the same purposes, but we made it a little larger."

"Pondowners can have the best of both worlds," said Steinkoenig, "but they have to take many factors into consideration." A pond ringed with eight-foot tall



David Hart

## Gaining Access to Private Ponds

Here are a few tips that might open doors to ponds that lie behind "Posted" signs:

- Do your homework. Find out who owns a particular pond before you knock on any doors. It will save time and help you avoid an embarrassing situation.
- Always ask permission to fish a privately-owned pond. It is illegal, under any circumstances, to fish on private property without permission from the landowner. To avoid any problems, get the permission in writing.
- Show up by yourself or with one friend. Landowners are more likely to grant access to one or two people than a whole carload. Ask if you can come back with a friend for a second visit.
- Introduce yourself and tell the owner that you will abide by any rules he sets. Let him know that you will leave any gates as you found them and that you will not disturb any livestock.
- Never leave trash behind. The number one complaint from property owners is litter. That's why so many private fishing holes are off limits.
- If you find any trash left by other anglers, pick it up. The landowner may never know of your good deed, but he will certainly notice any litter left behind by anglers—and he won't know who left it.
- At the end of your day, stop by and thank him. Let him know about your catch. More than likely, he'll remember you and grant permission the next time you ask permission to fish.
- Offer to lend a hand with his chores. It's a fair trade and it's a great way to show him you are a decent, responsible person.

cattails may be aesthetically appealing, but it's going to be tough to fish from the bank.

"The construction of a pond is critical," he said. "We recommend cutting the banks a minimum of three feet deep at the waterline to help control the growth of unwanted aquatic vegetation. A good average depth for a quality fishing pond

attract waterfowl, but I think the grass carp we stocked ate everything," he said. "I'll probably try planting again, but I'll make sure the carp can't get to it. I do want some vegetation around the banks."

Weidlein and his family gave little consideration to where they built the second body of water. They didn't have to. A small feeder creek

Of course, simply building a dam and waiting for it to fill up isn't enough. Steinkoenig said it's important to establish vegetation on the dam itself to help stabilize the soil, control siltation and strengthen the dam before the pond reaches its full pool. That's also the perfect time to build docks or any other structure on or around the pond.



©Dwight Dyke



©Dwight Dyke

should be between six and eight feet."

It is possible, however, to have areas with cattails, lily pads or some other attractive greenery along with deep water suitable for swimming in the same pond. "It's all in the construction," stressed Steinkoenig.

Weidlein said he and the others in his family really didn't put much thought into their second pond, since they basically knew they wanted to duplicate the original, smaller pond that sits within feet of his back door. But now that a few years have passed, he thinks he could have done a few things different to improve the fishery and make it more attractive to wildlife.

"After we built it, I planted a bunch of things along the shore to

with a steady, year-round flow bubbled through the bottom of a small ravine just below where he plans to build his dream house. On the east side of the site is a gently sloping pasture that's mowed twice a year for hay. The west bank is wooded and falls toward the pond at a slightly steeper angle than the open, east side. The site was tailor-made for a pond.

"The guy we hired to build it basically just cut down some trees along the creek and pushed some dirt around to make the dam," Weidlein said. Because of the layout of the pond site and the minimum amount of work that was required, he and his family paid around \$20,000 for the nearly two-acre pond. "I think we got off pretty cheap," he added.

Once the site work has been done and the pond has enough water to hold fish, it's time to think about stocking, provided fishing is to be part of the pond's purpose.

"Generally, pondowners should stick with a bluegill/largemouth bass mix," said Steinkoenig. "There is a stocking ratio that allows for good growth rates and a good balance between the two species. Channel catfish are a good addition in most cases, also, because they don't really harm bass or bluegill populations. Ponds at higher elevations that have cooler temperatures can support trout year-round and some pondowners stock only trout."

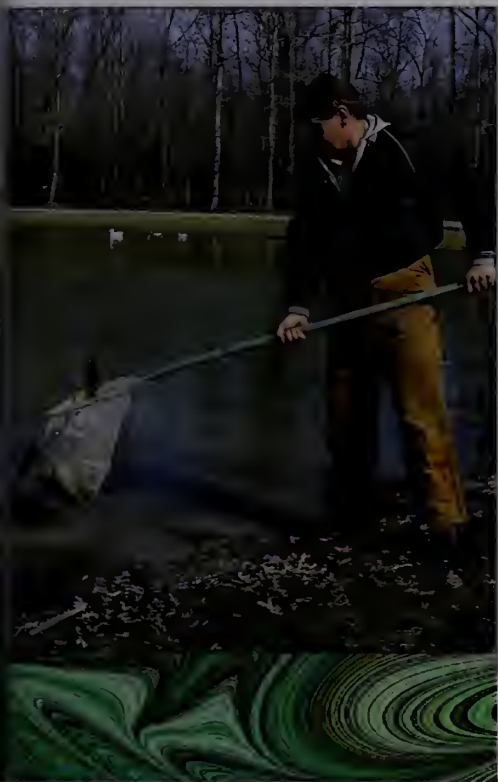
He added that many pondowners stock walleye, hybrid striped bass or northern pike in their farm pond.



"They don't readily adapt to that kind of an environment and they aren't going to do well, so we don't recommend stocking those fish."

Other fish that should not be stocked are crappie, bullhead, and yellow perch. They tend to overpopulate and compete with the desirable species for a limited food supply.

Weidlein followed the advice of a



Lee Walker

building a pond. Many farms and large building lots already have ponds on them. In fact, that's often one of the most attractive features of a parcel of property. Established ponds have a way of enhancing any view and adding to the already scenic vistas Virginia offers. And they add a sizeable chunk to the selling price of any piece of land.

How can a landowner improve an existing pond?

First, said Steinkoenig, they have to determine the construction of the pond and what's in it. If it's not deep enough, it won't be good for swimming, and unless they drain it and rebuild it, the situation won't change. One option to find out how many and what kind of fish are present is to use a long minnow seine to net the fish. Another option is to hire an outside contractor to do the work for them.

"You can't properly manage or improve a pond if you don't know what you are working with," insisted Steinkoenig. "If the pond is way out of balance, then you might want to consider removing all the fish and starting from scratch."

Another factor many pondowners fail to consider is water quality. Weidlein made sure the farmer who leases the hay rights on his family's property uses no fertilizers and

never plows the field around the pond.

That's smart, said Steinkoenig. High levels of nitrogen and phosphorous can be harmful to a pond and siltation from construction sites or plowed fields upstream can be detrimental not only to the appearance of a pond, but to the health of the fish. "Bass and bluegill mainly feed by sight. If a pond is muddy all the time, the fish are going to have a hard time feeding."

Weidlein is learning that it takes a lifelong commitment to maintain a healthy pond. The 50-year-old real estate agent spends "as much time as I can" working on and around his ponds, but admits that it's "not enough." His efforts, however slight, are paying off. The water is clean, the largemouth bass have grown fat and the catfish are in great shape.

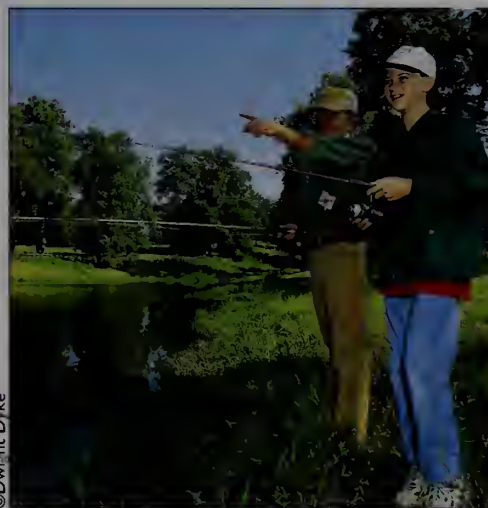
"You can't just dump in a bunch of fish and expect everything to take care of itself," said Steinkoenig. "You have to actively manage a pond if you want it to meet your expectations." □

David Hart is an outdoor writer for various Northern Virginia papers.

private fish farm and stocked a variety of species, including largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish and grass carp. (VDGIF does not provide or sell fish to private pondowners.) He also purchased what the fish farm called an "eco-pack." It consisted of snails, clams, tadpoles and a variety of invertebrates. A few months later, his brother added crappie. After seeing the effects of an exploding crappie population and after consulting with a biologist, they realized they made a mistake.

Steinkoenig said purchasing the "eco-pack" was also unnecessary. "Those things will show up on their own. It didn't hurt to put them in there, but it really wasn't needed."

Not every landowner has the luxury of planning, designing and



©Dwight Dyke

A small portable water quality test kit should be part of every pondowners' management program (above, far left). When limited to small areas, aquatic plants are vital to good habitat and an overall healthy pond environment (above, left). (Above) The right mix of stocked fish is important for fishing fun and success.



fisheries biologists Ed Steinkoenig, Dean Fowler

and John Copeland have just finished writing a booklet titled *Management of Virginia Ponds for Fishing*. It's filled with detailed, useful information for managing ponds of all sizes and for a variety of purposes. Included is information on building a pond, stocking fish, water quality control, habitat enhancement and a variety of other subjects. The booklet also contains a list of private fish hatcheries and agencies that advise landowners. It will be free and can be ordered after May 15 by writing the VDGIF main office at 4010 W. Broad St., P. O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104 or by contacting any regional office. Biologists are also available to offer advice to pondowners.



# River Chicken

by Michelle Scala

**C**atfish, sometimes called “River Chicken,” have become a favorite pursuit of more anglers than ever before. The reasons for this are the feisty nature of the fish and sometimes its tackle-busting size, which makes it fun to catch, and the good quality table fare that comes with the smaller sizes of catfish.

When I was growing up, I lived on a dairy farm with a big pond. My

siblings and I obtained two catfish that seemed huge to us. They were really much smaller than the brackish-water behemoths now pursued in many of Virginia’s tidal rivers, but we took these tremendous fish to our pond by means of our berry pail. They were so big that half their bodies and tails hung over the side of the pail. We released them in our pond and didn’t catch another glimpse of them for 15 years. Then, for whatever reason, a whiskered brute ended up on the bank. He measured 35 inches and weighed 20 pounds.

None of us can be absolutely certain, but I like to think this is one of the catfish we brought home that day, and that he had a fine long life in our pond.

Since that unusual stocking of catfish in our pond, I have been fishing with my husband on the Rappahannock River’s Lancaster Creek. Soon after we began this kind of fishing I realized that catfish are great fighters, as well as being delicious to eat. There are many types of catfish, including white, flatheads, bullheads, blue and channel cats.





few years ago, we met Greg Tignor, who at that time held the blue catfish state record, with a monster cat weighing more than 56 pounds. That record later fell, and the current record for a blue cat is more than 66 pounds. That one was caught in the Appomattox River. Greg introduced us to some of his catfish locations on the Rappahannock, including the famous spot where he once broke the state record. With the breath-taking views of the upper tidal Rappahannock and the thrill of these snappy fighters, we knew we were on to something good.

One of our favorite rigs for catching catfish is to use a round egg sinker with a couple of feet of leader before tying on your hook. In most cases, the sinker used will be one to three ounces depending on the depth and current. This setup allows the line to flow freely. Large catfish can be especially sensitive to flashy hardware and tight, short leaders. It is important to use a rig where they can pick up, and move around with the bait, without feeling immediate line tension or being alerted to brightly colored terminal tackle.

Catfish also act as predators, looking for smaller fish around sunken tree limbs or other under water obstructions. Bobbers are helpful in shallow waters or shore side edges, if at least a few feet of line is used between the hook and bobber. This rig can come in handy on small tidal tributaries and backwaters, such as Lancaster and Totuskey

Creeks off the Rappahannock. Among the many kinds of catfish baits are strips of or whole herring, small mud shad and live minnows. Aggressive channel cats have even been known to hit artificial lures.

Because of the increasing popularity of this fish as a fighting game species, there are an increasing number of catfish tournaments. In late March, Robbey and Pat Gullede of Port Royal Landing held their third catfish tournament on the Rappahannock River in less than a year's time. But many dedicated catfish anglers stared on other sections of the river as early as New Year's day.

Women anglers, such as Susan Sanders enjoy Virginia tidal waters, as they battle with the big blue river cats. Early last May, Susan took first place with a 36.2 pound whiskered brute, while fishing in the Annual Tappahannock Essex Volunteer Fire Department Catfish Tournament. In November of 1996, Brenda Hamner teamed up with William Ernestes to win the heaviest three fish for one of the Port Royal events. Whole families such as Amelia County's "fish-ing Goughs" and their three daughters can be found enjoying catfish tournament action.

The real brutes usually run in the spring and can often be found in shallow waters, where the water has already begun to warm. Another likely place to find big cats earlier in the year is around power plant warm water discharge pipes. The James River just below Richmond is another well-known monster blue catfish area. Dutch Gap and the waters near Drury's Bluff are well-known for 30 pound and over blue whiskered brutes, grappled aboard on hook and line. Come on out and try this favorite sport. Bring a sturdy rod and reel, plenty of fresh bait, safety gear and hang on for a line peeling experience with one rascal of a whiskered fish. □

*The popularity of catfish tournaments continues to grow in Virginia. Catfish thrive in the state's tidal rivers, but they also do well in managed ponds, as outlined on pages 14-17. In the tidal rivers catfish can be found even in areas with salinity up to three percent and sometimes higher.*

They can be found in streams, lakes, ponds and rivers. The most commonly caught in Virginia waters are blue and channel cats. In Lancaster Creek, we caught some nice size blue and channel cats, quickly realizing that even the small ones put up a great fight.

The James and Rappahannock Rivers remain famous for catfish. A



David Hart

*Michelle Scala lives in the Northern Neck and writes about her experiences as an outdoor woman. She can be found at [ScalaOutdoors@worldnest.att.net](mailto:ScalaOutdoors@worldnest.att.net).*



MERCURY



# White Perch Fishing

by Gerald Almy



The air from the chilly fall night hung crisp and cool over the lake, colliding with the warm waters to form shrouds of mist that hung motionless above the liquid surface. As we eased the 16 foot wooden skiff through the dense white fog we could occasionally see vague shapes of land, keeping us on course. But the trip to our favorite fishing spot on a lower arm of Lake Gaston that normally took just ten minutes required a half-hour of slow motoring this morning to avoid bumping into land—or worse—another boat emerging suddenly from the curtain of white mist.

When Mickey and I reached our chosen location where water funnels from broad Pea Hill creek

through a narrow bridge opening, we anchored out, baited size 1 hooks with live shiners and tossed them into the flow. The current and pilings of the bridge attracted shad and minnows, and they, in turn would attract chunky largemouths and sleek stripers up to three feet long. They had in the past at least, and those were the two quarries we sought this fall morning.

Mickey's rod bowed first as his minnow finned on the bottom. After setting the hook sharply, he was solidly connected to a 15 inch largemouth. And that was the last action we had from our target gamefish species.

While Mickey rebaited I pumped my minnow across the bottom and

felt a solid tap. It was a sharp, electric bite and I thought for sure I had a striped bass on the line when I pulled back and felt resistance. But the fish didn't run like a striper would. Instead, it thrashed and bucked deep. When I worked it to the top and it rolled we saw a flash of silver, but a much broader, deeper body. Finally I pumped the quarry close and swung it aboard.

"White perch!" Mickey exclaimed. "That fish will qualify for a citation. It's easily over a pound-and-a-quarter."

Indeed it was—perhaps even closer to a pound-and-a-half. Though it's called a perch, this gamefish is actually a member of the true bass family, like stripers and white bass. Scientifically known as *Morone americana*, it reaches a top weight of 4 pounds, 12 ounces. That was what the world record weighed, caught in Maine's Messalonskee Lake by Mrs. Earl Small on June 4, 1949. A one pound, four ounce fish is indeed a trophy, and I was thrilled to catch the citation-qualifying fish.

But at the moment, my major concern was to rebait quickly and see if there were other slab-sided perch around. This is a schooling species. Where you catch one others often lurk nearby. And indeed there were. Before I could toss another shiner out my partner's rod bowed deep to the weight of a third heavy perch. This one would top a pound and like all true bass, fought stubbornly against the light spin outfit.

As soon as my minnow sank to the bottom I felt a tap-tapping and our third white perch of the morning was soon struggling against the thin graphite rod.

We took three more lunker perch that morning, with the last one offering the most fascinating experience of all. As I pumped that fish in,

suddenly a huge dark form appeared behind it, chasing the terrified silver prey. It was a striper as long as a man's leg trying to eat the pound-sized perch, which had just eaten my minnow. Unfortunately, the perch was too large a mouthful for the big true bass to swallow and it soon gave up and sank back into the depths.

That ended our morning's perch blitz. Evidently the school decided they'd find less crowded waters

This latter habitat is the one most people associate with white perch. Starting around late February or March, the fish surge upriver to areas near the fall line (where freshwater meets brackish), congregating in pools for the mating ritual. The Rappahannock around Fredericksburg is one of the most popular spots. Other rivers such as the James, York, Pamunkey, Nottoway, Blackwater, North Landing and Mattaponi also offer good late win-



©Dwight Dyke

where 20 pound stripers weren't looking for a meal.

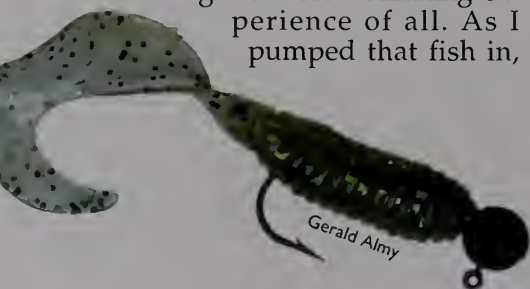
White perch are widely available throughout Virginia, yet few people seek out this feisty silver quarry. That's a shame, because not only are perch game battlers on light gear, they make delicious table fare with delicate, flaky white flesh. They're also eclectic in their tastes and can be caught readily whether your angling tastes tend towards retrieving lures, dunking bait or casting flies.

This is one of only two Virginia fish (the striper is the other) found in three habitats—freshwater lakes, tidal rivers and the saltwater of the Chesapeake Bay. White perch are caught in the lower reaches of many of the state's rivers and in the Bay itself during summer and fall months. During late winter and spring they invade tidal rivers by the thousands on massive spawning runs.

Although the white perch is not considered to be one of Virginia's favorite game fish, perch can provide a great fishing opportunity in the state's rivers. Great perch action can be had throughout eastern Virginia, even on the Potomac up to Washington, D.C. The James River, above, is also a good source of perch. Rubber-tailed grubs (below left) and streamers (center) can be good lures, and the Hopkins (below right) can work well in the winter.

ter-early spring perch runs. The Potomac offers superb perch fishing in tributaries and in the river itself all the way from the mouth of the Bay up to Washington, D.C. Fishing is good both from shore and from boats in almost all of these rivers.

Top method for catching tidal water perch is bait fishing with pieces of blood worms or clam snouts on a bottom rig with a dipsey or bell sinker of 1-2 ounces and two size 4-8 hooks on spreader leaders 6 and 12 inches above the weight. Action can be good any time, but is





usually best two hours before and after a high tide. Lacking bloodworms or clam snouts, small pieces of nightcrawlers or a whole red wriggler or earthworm will work almost as well. If you don't get a bite, keep moving. Perch are a cooperative fish to catch once you find them. You may be just up or downstream from a large school.

Live minnows—either shiners or preferably mummichog (bull) minnows—are another top offering for perch in tidal rivers. These have the advantage of only attracting the larger specimens in the  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pound range.

Perch in rivers will also strike spoons, shad darts, jigs, grubs and small slowly-retrieved minnow plugs and crankbaits. The key to successful lure fishing for spawners is to get the offering down near the bottom and work it slowly, either steadily or with short pumps of the rod tip. Tackle should consist of a light action rod of  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -7 feet and a spin reel filled with 4-8 pound monofilament.

It may seem odd, but river perch can also be taken on flies. I've enjoyed this type of sport several times and it's a blast. Use a 5-7 weight 8-9 foot rod and either a floating or sink-

tant and I often simply tie my own flies with a floss or rabbit fur body in red, yellow or orange (over lead wire) with a white marabou wing and perhaps a bit of mylar or tinsel tied in for flash.

Work these flies in short strips down close to the bottom. Taking white perch on a fly adds a whole new dimension to this river fishing.

Lake fishing for white perch is also excellent in Virginia and this sport can be quite good from now through November and December. Among the better perch lakes in the state are Gaston, Anna, Buggs Island, Chickahominy, Western Branch, Meade, Back Bay, Motts Run and Lake Prince, where the current 2 pound, 8 ounce state record was caught.

Fishing points, dropoffs, structure areas around bridge pilings, submerged humps and holes where the bottom drops off deeper than surrounding water is the best tactic for lake fish. Chris McCotter, a guide on Lake Anna, likes to jig small slab spoons such as the Luhr-Jensen Crippled Herring or small Hopkins spoons in the  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce size for the fish during fall and winter. "They lie tight on the bottom so you want to keep the lure right near the lake floor as you try for them," says McCotter. "Lower the spoon to the bottom, then reel up two turns and jig the lure up and down a foot or two at a time. When you catch those perch in the late fall and winter they actually have mud on their stomachs from laying so tight on the bottom. The area around the Rt. 208 bridge where creek mouths come into the lake are good. Find deep water and ledges near the mouths of the creeks and you should find perch."

White, yellow and chartreuse jigs also work on lake fish when crawled or hopped deep and blade lures are excellent. Soft plastic grubs on a  $\frac{1}{16}$ - $\frac{1}{8}$  ounce leadhead and lures such as the Mister Twister Sassy Shad are other good choices.

Flies are another option for lake fishing when the quarry is in water 15 feet deep or less. Use the same compact brightly-colored stream-

ers recommended for river fish with a sinking-tip fly line and short tapered leader.

For lake fish one of the best natural offerings is a nightcrawler fished on a bottom rig. This setup will take perch, mixed with catfish, redears, bluegills, walleyes and occasionally even largemouths. For most of my bait fishing, though, I turn to the same method my friend and I used on Gaston to take the jumbo perch while we were actually seeking largemouths and stripers.

Use a size 1-4 bait hook such as an Eagle Claw Series 42, crimp one to three split shot on the line 12 or so inches above the hook and bait up with a shiner in the 1-3 inch range. Cast out to the types of structure described above and either let the bait sit on the bottom or reel it in slowly, just like you would fish a plastic worm, occasionally nicking bottom. You may catch a citation-sized 20 ounce white perch or you may latch onto a 15 pound striper. Either way, this rig is a sure bet to produce exciting sport.

And somehow a bucket of minnows or box of nightcrawlers and light spin rod seems to fit this fishing just right. White perch are a great common man's fish. You don't need any expensive fast boat or snazzy electronic gear. A small cartopper will do or you can just fish from shore and often do as well as the boat angler. White perch are not fussy feeders and are often almost too easy to catch. They're prolific breeders so you don't have to feel guilty about keeping a few for a meal. And their flaky, white flesh makes some of the best table fare imaginable. A better quarry for a fall fishing foray would be hard to find.

*Gerald Almy has been a full-time outdoor writer for over 19 years. He is currently a hunting and fishing editor on the staff of Sports Afield.*



Gerald Almy

ing tip line, depending on how deep the fish are. With a floating line you'll often need a weighted fly and/or tiny split shot on the leader to take the offering deep.

Occasionally they'll nail a small popper or dry fly on top, but most of my fly rod white perch have responded to small bright streamers about one-inch long. The same flies will take hickory and white shad, which are often found in the river at the same time. Pattern isn't impor-



Gerald Almy

# A Refuge From Flight

by Emily M. Grey

*The VDGI's Saxis Wildlife Management Area provides habitat for a huge variety of birds, including ducks, grebes, loons, herons, egrets, shorebirds and songbirds. Come see for yourself.*

Dwight Dyke



**A**t first blush, a salt marsh may appear to be an endless stretch of nonproductive stillness. Suddenly, the clamor of whirring wings fills the early May sky. It is no longer a silent spring for the height of migration has arrived.

After flying many miles without stopping for food or rest, a weary flock finally spots the awaited oasis. A bird's eye aerial view of meandering tidal creeks, familiar mudflats, brackish marshes and upland hummocks glistening with reflective sunlight emerges. Some birds will

pass through. Others will stop to refuel or seek shelter from adverse weather before resuming their journey north. Those that remain will establish feeding, mating and nesting territories until autumn beckons them to head south to find a more sustainable food source. For numerous avian species this is spring migration, a time of renewal and rebirth.

Located along the strategic Atlantic Flyway, Virginia's tidal wetlands offer excellent bird-watching opportunities. Perhaps one of the least known havens to view avifauna is Saxis Wildlife Management Area. This 5,574-



Route 695 west approximately ten miles from U.S. Highway 13.

Be prepared to trek across some mucky, albeit beautiful, terrain for this delicate ecosystem is not laden with boardwalks or dry, elevated trails. Don your hip boots, strap on a good pair of binoculars and bring along insect repellent. Step softly across the salt-marsh cordgrass and be alert for cryptically-colored sharp-tailed or swamp sparrows. Beware! At any moment, a disturbed willet sounding its renown "pul-will-willet" may dart upward from its hiding place in the low or high marsh.

Trudge onward past muskrat trails which traverse into the higher marsh meadows. You may be graced with the melodious song of a red-winged blackbird or the low chuck of a seaside sparrow. Hark! The hoarse crank-crank of a great blue, North America's largest heron, resonates across the migratory corridor.

Scan the sky for various songbirds, including neotropicals, as they pass over the marshland and head for

the forested uplands or hummocks. Explore these high ground woodlands which are situated farther inland. Warblermania may strike!

You may elect to view the vernal homecoming by boat. Public launch ramps are provided at Saxis, Messongo Creek and Marsh Market. After consulting the appropriate tide tables, paddle a canoe around Messongo Creek, Beasley Bay, Pocomoke Sound or some of the smaller brackish inlets which surround the fens. Keep your eyes peeled and ears attuned for waterfowl and shorebirds. You may see the easily startled black duck or hear the loud quacking of the commonplace mallard. Look for great and snowy egrets, tiny sandpipers called peeps, and a plethora of other coastal birds as they search diligently for fish, mollusks, insects or worms along the shoreline.

Nighttime hosts a gratis show by least bitterns, marsh wrens, king and the rarer black rails. The haunting call of the predatory great-horned owl or the shrill cry of the little screech owl may rock the marsh. Take a flashlight and boots and park at one of the launch ramps and await as nature unfolds her nocturnal surprises.

Saxis Wildlife Management Area is the only known nesting spot for Henslow's

*Birders venturing onto the Eastern Shore will want to make the Saxis Wildlife Management Area part of their itinerary. An array of birds can be observed, such as the willet (right).*

acre region, situated on the bayside of Virginia's Eastern Shore, yields one of Accomack County's most pristine marsh habitats.

"Saxis Marsh" is divided into two peninsular tracts which are essentially maintained in their natural states. Freeschool Marsh, the northern tract, is open to public waterfowl and white-tailed deer hunting. Michael Marsh, the southern waterfowl refuge, is closed to hunting. To reach this riparian sanctuary, follow



Allen Hearne



sparrow on Virginia's coastal plain. Besides the aforesaid black rail and sharp-tailed sparrow, other state protected species which inhabit Saxis Marsh include the Virginia and sora rail and Northern harrier or marsh hawk. Check for the latter species as it hovers low over its coastal domain. You may even catch a glimpse of the bald eagle as it soars majestically over its flourishing kingdom.

If you missed sitings last winter, next time around watch for Canada geese and puddle ducks such as American widgeon, Northern pintail and green-winged teal swimming or waddling about the marsh. Open water serves as a retreat for bufflehead, canvasback, goldeneye, mergansers, redhead, scaup, sea ducks, loons and grebes.

Other watchable wildlife roving about Saxis Marsh include white-tailed deer, red and gray fox, mink, muskrat, river otter, cottontail rabbit, raccoon and opossum. The area also offers wonderful saltwater fishing for striped and channel bass, bluefish, croaker, black drum, flounder and gray and speckled trout.

Before leaving Virginia's Chesapeake Bay country, utilize your senses to their fullest. Take

time to inhale the fresh saline air and taste the succulent jointed stems of glasswort. Feel the coarse texture of the bulrushes and the smooth stems of black needlerush. Know that marsh vegetation and marine birds are particularly adapted to thrive in this harsh specialized environment. Now ask yourself: Is it any wonder Captain John Smith and his descendants called it "Land of pleasant living" or "God's country"?

While visiting Virginia's Eastern Shore, you may wish to partake of other wildlife activities and viewing areas. Plan on attending the third annual International Migratory Bird Celebration at nearby Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge May 9th through the 11th.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries oversees 29 Wildlife Management Areas. All citizens are invited to hunt, fish, trap, camp or watch wildlife in designated sections of these lands. *A Guide to Virginia's Wildlife Management Areas* is available from VIB, P.O. Box 27563, Richmond, VA 23261. Please enclose \$5.00 for shipping and handling.

*Emily Grey is an attorney and also a freelance writer and photographer living on the Eastern Shore.*

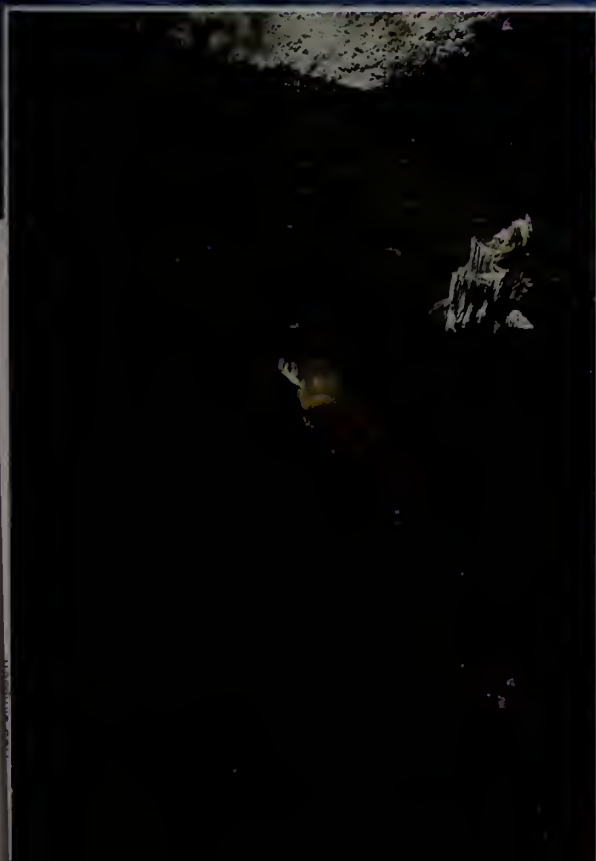


Dwight Dyke

Fishing opportunities at Saxis include striped bass, flounder, gray and speckled trout, croaker, bluefish, black drum and channel bass. Among the many wildlife species you may observe at the management area are red-winged black bird (top left), the great blue heron and otters (right).

You might want to combine a visit to the Saxis Wildlife Management Area with attendance at the Eastern Shore Birding Festival, October 3-5, 1997. For Birding Festival information call the Virginia Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce at (757) 787-2460.





Joe Mac Hudspeth Jr

## Angling as a Metaphor for a Spiritual Sojourn

by Rich Jefferson

*"You will find angling to be like the virtue of humility, which has a calmness of spirit and a world of other blessings attending upon it."*

*"Doubt not but angling will prove to be so pleasant that it will prove to be, like virtue, a reward to itself."*

Izaak Walton  
*The Compleat Angler*, 1652

Izaak Walton was a man who knew how critical fishing could be to maintaining a sensible perspective. In the middle of tumultuous 17th Century England at age 59 Walton sat down to write *The Compleat Angler*. He was a Londoner, born in 1593, when Queen Elizabeth was on the throne. He lived 90 years, which is astounding for the time, dying in 1683. During his lifetime William Shakespeare's greatest plays were first produced in London's Globe Theater, the *King James Bible* was published, the English had their Civil War, and the first editions of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* were published. In the middle of the century, in the midst of legal and cultural upheaval, Izaak Walton published his famous book some of us still enjoy today.

We don't know what other works on fishing will last three-and-half centuries after their publication, but we do know that some are books worthwhile today. We can't say, and we will never really know the impact and longevity of today's books, but one thing we can say: Harry Murray's new book, *His Blessings Through Angling*, is certainly worth reading now.

The book has a definite devotional element to it, and if you don't care for the confluence of fishing and Murray's vision of faith you won't

like this book. But if you have a passion for fishing, as well as religious sentiments, you might find yourself reveling in parts of *His Blessings Through Angling*, issued by Shenandoah Publishing Company. Some of the photography is wonderful, and the book has plenty, shot by the author.

Murray writes frequently for *Virginia Wildlife*, explaining the details of his favorite techniques, but in this book tells us why he loves fishing. Murray, who runs perhaps the only pharmacy/fly-fishing tackle shop in the universe (certainly the only one in Edinburg, Virginia) tells us something we know, that fishing is fun. But he also shows how angling provides a way of seeing the world and the human condition. Angling is a tool for grappling with life's tough dilemmas.

The Biblical quotations seem appropriate for an author who is blending angling expertise, fond childhood remembrances and spiritual epiphany. Every angler who has waited patiently for the strike will appreciate the unintended irony of Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Or the words from the Old Testament

prophet Habakkuk when he said "...though it tarry, wait for it..." So fishing becomes a metaphor of some of life's difficulties. The ancient texts undoubtedly were not written with the thought of flyfishing near Edinburg, but you get the point.

The book also includes Murray's usual dose of practical advice on how and where to fish. Heaven is not found on this earth, but for anglers there is taste of glory. "There is a quantum difference between catching a fish and catching the exact fish you intend to catch. Fly-fishing may be walking up to a new pool in a never before fished river, choosing the station where the biggest fish should be, taking another step and seeing him, then casting the exactly correct fly to the perfect spot and catching him on the first drift. It happens with practice," Murray writes.

The tradition of using fishing to make a religious point goes far past Izaak Walton, at least to the days of St. Peter, and this is a modern expression of thanks from one man to his Creator for gifts freely bestowed. Murray's gift to the reader is participation in Murray's sense of gratitude for these gifts. The book does more than impart the sense that we must throw down all present pur-



Lee Walker



suits and immediately go fishing, which all decent writing about fishing will. This book, if allowed, will evoke in the reader a sense of gratitude for the gifts of friends who share the joy of puzzling out the right lure for the right moment, the physical rush of successfully pursuing beautiful fish and those moments when the angler can sense the presence of the One who created the fish that provide so much pleasure for anglers.

Harry Murray has done something many others would like to do. He has turned his love of fly-fishing into something bigger than a hobby. His ever increasing stature on the national scene testifies to this.

Today, many of us look to the fishing experience as a peaceful, rejuvenating time, just as Murray does and Izaak Walton did. Walton still speaks to us, across the centuries, and perhaps someday, anglers and writers like Harry Murray might do the same for our posterity. □

Other books by Harry Murray:  
*Trout Fishing in the Shenandoah National Park*  
*Fly-fishing for Smallmouth Bass*

Rich Jefferson is editor of Virginia Wildlife.

## Daylighting and Releasing

by Dan Lovelace, Wildlife Biologist

Daylighting and releasing are terms used by wildlife biologists to describe beneficial habitat management practices. When inspecting a property for wildlife habitat potential, a biologist may recommend that a woodland road be "daylighted" or that an old apple tree in some deserted homeplace be "released." The landowner oftentimes nods in agreement, without further explanation and without realizing the actual process involved or the benefits derived as a result.

If there was a Biologists' Manual on Technical Terms, it would define daylighting as "the process of providing sunlight." The definition of

releasing is "to set free of confinement," or "to let go." Providing sunlight can be accomplished in a variety of ways but with similar benefits. For example, roads through wooded areas tend to be overgrown and shaded. The roadbed is usually covered with a mat of leaves and only a few shade tolerant plants may be growing. Only a few species of wildlife might be seen using the area.

The recommendation to provide sunlight to the road invokes a sometimes drastic change. Trees and other vegetation shading the roadbed must be removed. In some instances selected trees can be removed to allow sunlight to penetrate. Generally, the removal of all trees, 40 to 50 feet on each side of the road, is most desirable. This can be accomplished through firewood cutting or through commercial logging. Sometimes shrubby growth is present and a bulldozer is required to "open the road up" to provide sunlight.

No matter what the method, the results will be a dramatic regrowth of vegetation. Stumps will resprout, weeds, grasses, and vines will begin to grow, and the roadbed itself can then be planted to beneficial vegetation. A change like this in the habitat becomes attractive to many wild species. Turkey take advantage of the downed tree tops for nesting cover and the vegetation along the roadway for "bugging areas." Deer find plenty to eat among sprouting stumps and succulent weeds. Songbirds cruise the area searching for seeds and insects. Quail and rabbits might also be attracted to the newly developed cover. Daylighting is a simple management practice that alters habitats and provide benefits to wildlife.

Releasing is also a practice often recommended by wildlife biologists. Fruit trees found near old house sites or in abandoned orchards respond well when released, or set free of their confinements. For example, an abandoned apple tree, having suffered years of neglect generally develops into thickly branched, poorly growing tree. It is

often overgrown with faster growing trees and vines, and produces a poor fruit crop. The confinements of the apple tree are the thick unpruned branches and the overgrowth of trees and vines. To conduct an effective release, remove all trees above and in contact with the apple trees' branches. A small chainsaw works well for this. Vines choking the trunk and branches should also be removed. Dead limbs should be cut out and finally, the tree should be given a thorough pruning.

Once released, the lifespan, health, and productivity of the tree will be improved. Apple and other fruit-producing trees are valuable wildlife food sources. The fruits, leaves, buds, twigs, and even the bark are used by a variety of birds and mammals. Releasing fruit trees is a wildlife management practice that actually produces bountiful results.

Whether daylighting roads or releasing fruit trees, an afternoon spent using a chainsaw, bowsaw, or lopping or pruning shears can significantly improve wildlife habitat on your property. □



## Letter to the Editor

### Unlike Anything Else

I enjoy almost everything in *Virginia Wildlife*. The detail into which the articles go about this state is unlike anything you can get in another hunting or fishing magazine. I enjoy the articles about the work VDGIF does for habitat conservation. The best article I ever read in *Virginia Wildlife* was about the New River fishing. Thanks for taking the time to listen to a subscriber and to ask about my thoughts

Very Sincerely  
Otis Chambers  
Roanoke

*This letter came to us via electronic mail. Virginia Wildlife is receiving subscriptions regularly from our Home Page at [www.state.va.us/dgif/index.htm](http://www.state.va.us/dgif/index.htm). Thanks for your input. We are planning another article on the New River for sometime next year.*

—the Editor.

## Cornflowers

Cornflowers aren't native wildflowers, which means they weren't growing here when the settlers arrived, but, introduced from the Mediterranean region of Europe, they now reproduce in the wild so readily, we consider them wildflowers. Their common name cornflower is apt because grain fields are the places where you see them growing most profusely; there's blue as far as you can see in fields near Deltaville where cornflowers have naturalized. And it was from bales of wheat straw that cornflowers were introduced to my Buckingham farm. After a large-scale, earth-moving project one fall, a contractor covered his tracks with wheat straw, and the following spring the grounds were awash in cornflowers. Cornflowers have been a part of our landscape ever since, and it's not just their intense blue flowers we celebrate; it's the goldfinches that inevitably come with them.

"They're dandelions," a nearsighted friend insisted when she saw spots of yellow dotting the field filled with cornflowers that surrounds my vegetable garden. "They're goldfinches," I insisted not because I could see them better but because I expected them to be there. And sure enough, as we approached, the "dandelions" flew away.

It is an incredible sight, these cornflowers and goldfinches, because their colors are both so intense. What the goldfinches are after are the hard, bristle-topped seed structures in the base of the cornflower flower heads. They work the flowers over the way raccoons work a cornfield, and if you want to save cornflower seeds, as I do, you have to be really vigilant in order to beat

the goldfinches to the mature seeds.

Cornflowers (*Centaurea cyanus*) are annuals, which means they sprout, mature and die in a single year, but they are hardy annuals so you can plant the seeds in early spring or even in the fall. Oddly enough, although we think of these as late spring and early summer wildflowers, sometimes you'll see cornflowers blooming as late as November in fields that have been plowed at a time that allowed them a second seeding. This preference



Cornflowers are natives of Mediterranean Europe, not North America. But they have earned a colorful place here, as their many names attest. Photo by Nancy Hugo.

for grain fields suggests where you'd want to grow them: in well-drained areas in full sun.

Another common name for cornflowers is bachelor's buttons, and it is this name you'll find most often on seed packets selling these bright blue (and sometimes pink or white) flowers. There are several explanations for the origin of the name, most of them relating to the structure of the flowers and how they were once used. Because of their thistle-like shape, it is said that bachelors, who couldn't sew on their own buttons, once used these flower heads as one might use cufflinks to hold their

clothes together. Another explanation holds that the name was adopted because the flowers resemble a kind of medieval "button" we're no longer familiar with—fasteners made of ragged wads or swatches of cloth. English maidens were also said to wear these flowers as signs they were eligible for marriage.

Other common names for cornflowers include blue bottle, blue-bonnet, and ragged sailors.

Although I think their deep blue color and silvery foliage set cornflowers apart, some people confuse cornflowers with chicory—a more widespread perennial wildflower that also blooms along roadsides. Chicory flowers, however, are a paler blue than cornflowers, and they lack the cornflower's thistle-like shape. Chicory flowers close during the heat of the day and each flower lasts only a day, while cornflowers not only stay open all day and last longer than a day, they retain their deep blue color even after drying. Because field guides sometimes refer to spotted knapweed as bachelor's buttons, some confusion arises

between it and cornflowers, too. Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) shares the cornflower's thistle-like shape but its flowers are smaller, generally later-blooming, and are a more lavender-pink color than those of cornflowers. Spotted knapweed is also a much bushier plant with coarse, stiff stems, and I wonder if it isn't this plant, and not our less rigid cornflower, that led to the common name "hurt sickle" that farmers once reportedly applied to bachelor's buttons when they couldn't, without dulling their sickles, eradicate them from fields. □





# Safety

by Col. William Antozzi, Boating Safety Officer

## Navigation Aids

Many years ago, a pilot approaching a coast or negotiating a river had very little to guide him. Today, boaters are lucky, because our seacoasts and navigable waterways are generally well marked.

These markers, called "aids to navigation" are of various types to suit conditions and locations. All aids to navigation (except private aids) in the water over which the United States has jurisdiction are designed, built, and maintained by the United States Coast Guard.

In deep water, floating markers called "buoys" are very common while tall poles with markers near the top are often found in shallower areas. Other aids are lighthouses, lightships, and range markers.

If we go up a river, from the sea, we will find red aids to navigation with even numbers on our right, and green aids with odd numbers on our left. We have arbitrarily decided to think of going upstream as "returning," so we remember which side the red aids should be on, by

saying, "red, right, returning." Conversely, proceeding downstream, the red aids will be on the left.

At night we cannot see the color of the aids or their numbers without a spotlight or flashlight. To help boaters, many aids are equipped with lights. The red aids may have red lights and the green aids may have green lights. Aids to navigation may also have reflectors which have the same color-significance as lights.

Mid-channel buoys may be passed on either side, and they have red and white vertical stripes. Since they mark the center of the channel,

it is safe to pass fairly close to them. A type buoy which marks junctions, wrecks, or obstructions, is the horizontally banded buoy. If the topmost band is red, it should be treated the same as a red aid to navigation, and kept on the right going upstream. If the topmost band is green, it should be treated as a green aid and kept to the left going upstream.

There are many kinds of sound-buoys. The important ones may be equipped with horns, whistles, bells or gongs, and are useful in periods of low visibility, such as darkness, heavy precipitation or fog. Many sound buoys are activated by the motion of the sea, and when the water is calm may emit no sound at all.

When a rotating amber light is seen, or a siren heard at a waterfront facility, there is an emergency at that location. Boaters should stand well clear of facilities giving such signals, and report the occurrence as soon as possible to the nearest Coast Guard unit or other law enforcement agency or unit. □



©Dwight Dyke



©Dwight Dyke



©Dwight Dyke

# May Afield

by Jack Randolph

In the days before high powered bass boats many of us carried our outboard motors in the trunks of our cars and rented our boats at the lake. I remember many pre-dawn races to Ed Allen's Camp on the Chickahominy, hoping to get there before the last rental boat was taken.

Getting a boat on a Saturday morning was never a sure thing in March and April, but by May, salt-water fishing was luring some anglers away from the lakes, and more boats were available.

As a rule many salt water species, such as croakers and trout, move into Virginia's waters earlier in the spring, but they are not active until the water temperatures get well up into the fifties in late April and May. Usually, May is the month when the black drum congregate off Cape Charles and the red drum come into Magothy Bay. It is also the month when croakers commence to take squid baits in the York River and speckled trout start to look for peeler crabs in Mobjack Bay and elsewhere. May is the month of the two-week trophy striped bass season in tidal waters and on the 16th the month-long season opens for stripers in the 18 to 28 inch slot.

Already this year speckled trout were netted off the beach and croakers as heavy as 5 pounds were taken commercially off of Sandbridge. Many anglers look at these catches as omens of a very special year for catching croakers and speckled trout. Considering how unusually mild the weather has been we may well see some typical May fishing earlier than usual.

Those of us who watch the lakes around Suffolk are aware that May is prime time for catching shellcrackers. It seems that the leadership in the production of huge shellcrackers switches from Lake Prince to Lake Western Branch from year to year. Last year Lake Prince seemed to be the better lake, but Western Branch wasn't all that far behind.

Shellcracker is a popular name for the redear sunfish, a fast growing member of the sunfish family which is native to the Midwest. All of the redears found in Virginia were introduced here.

It didn't take long for the shellcracker to win the hearts and minds of anglers within easy driving distance of the Suffolk lakes. There have been years when the number of citations weighing one pound or better or measuring 11-inches long or longer, approached a thousand from Lakes Prince and Western Branch alone.

There are quite a few shellcracker specialists on the Suffolk Lakes. One way of identifying these fellows is many carry long poles aboard their boats which they shove in the bottom of the lake and tie up to rather than use anchors. Most like to fish for shellcrackers in 10 to 12 feet of water. If you see fishermen using poles instead of anchors you can be pretty sure they are seriously fishing for shellcrackers.

The reason these poles are preferred over anchors is they provide a steadier fishing platform. Inasmuch as shellcrackers are fished for using worm-baited lines right on the bottom, anglers have to watch their lines carefully to detect a bite. I noticed that many shellcracker regulars prefer small spin cast or push-button reels on light action casting rods for this work.

One way to find shellcrackers is to look for other shellcracker fishermen. Another way is to look for sandy or gravelly areas near shore and to fish in the deeper water nearby.

May is prime month for shellcrackers, usually starting around the end of the first week.

Actually, I wonder if the shellcracker isn't under fished in many state waters? The technique of bottom fishing with worms is not widely used for sunfish. In addition to the Suffolk Lakes the only other place I

know where this technique is widely used is in the winter on the Roanoke River a few hundred yards below Gaston Dam in North Carolina where a select few anglers corner some shellcrackers. Perhaps if more anglers searched for shellcrackers with worms on the bottom they would discover a new and exciting fishery in other lakes and ponds.

Speaking of fishing techniques, early May will still find some river herring below Walkers Dam where anglers catch them on gold hooks. I first discovered this technique in New Jersey on the Delaware River in Trenton over 30 years ago. But apparently we don't have a monopoly on catching herring with bare hooks. Recently, I was surprised to learn, reading a book about fishing in Ireland, that "black gut herring" are frequently caught on bare hooks or small feathers in a place called "the Gobbins" in County Antrim on the Old Sod. The blue-back herring, one of our river herring, has a black lining in the stomach cavity. Perhaps it is the American equivalent of the "black gut herring" of Ireland.

Since the moratorium was placed on American or white shad in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the Nottoway River and the Meherrin River is getting more attention. These rivers flow into the Chowan River and are not part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed which means there is no closed season on American shad. Both streams host good runs that continue well into late May. There is, however, a word of caution.

During the spring gobbler hunting season local hunters take a dim view of shad fishermen traipsing through their posted woods before noon. In all cases, permission is required from the landowners. Permits to fish the river, with appropriate courtesy to turkey hunters, may be obtained from the Union Camp Corporation in Franklin. □



# Recipes

By Joan Cone

## The Versatile Catfish

**V**ersatility. It's a virtue that enables catfish to substitute for chicken, replace Dover sole or take the place of salmon. It can be baked, broiled, grilled, stewed, barbecued, poached, sautéed, blackened and stir-fried.

Catfish is best when cooked within two days of catching and when frozen properly it will keep for up to three months.

A fillet of catfish is rich in protein and nutrients. At the same time it is low in calories and cholesterol... lower than the equivalent of chicken, beef or pork.

### Menu

*Catfish Parmesan*

*Cornmeal Fritters*

*Lemon-Sesame Asparagus*

*California Vegetable Salad*

*Date Pecan Tarts*

### Catfish Parmesan

6 pan dressed whole catfish or catfish fillets

1 to 2 cups dry bread crumbs

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup Parmesan cheese

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped parsley

1 teaspoon paprika

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon oregano

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon basil

Salt and pepper to taste

$\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup margarine or cooking oil

Lemon wedges

Combine bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese, parsley, paprika, oregano, basil, salt and pepper. Dip catfish in melted margarine or oil and roll in crumb mixture. Arrange

fish in a well greased baking dish, 14 x 9 x 2-inches. Bake in a 375° oven for 25 minutes or until fish flakes easily. Cooking time will be less if using fillets. Serves 6.

### Cornmeal Fritters

1 cup cornmeal

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt

2 eggs beaten

$1\frac{1}{4}$  cups buttermilk

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Combine cornmeal, soda and salt. Add eggs, buttermilk and oil and beat until smooth. Drop batter by tablespoonful on hot greased griddle or in a large skillet. After fritters brown on bottom, turn quickly and lightly brown on other side. Makes 12 to 16 fritters.

### Lemon-Sesame Asparagus

2 pounds fresh asparagus

2 teaspoons sesame seeds

1 tablespoon butter or margarine

2 tablespoons lemon juice

Salt to taste

Tabasco pepper sauce to taste

Wash asparagus; break off each stalk as far down as it snaps easily. Cook, covered, in boiling water in a large skillet for 5 to 10 minutes, just until crisp-tender. Drain; remove to heated serving dish and keep warm. Brown sesame seeds in butter in skillet; add lemon juice, salt and Tabasco. Pour over cooked asparagus. 4 to 6 servings.

### California Vegetable Salad

1 package (16 ounces) Cole slaw blend

2 cups broccoli florets

1 cup sliced celery

1 cup cherry tomatoes cut in half

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup vinegar

2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard

$\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon sugar (optional)

Combine Cole slaw, broccoli, celery and tomatoes in a large bowl. Stir together oil, vinegar, mustard, garlic powder and sugar in a small bowl. Pour dressing over salad. Toss together and serve. Makes 8 servings.

### Date Pecan Tarts

2 eggs, lightly beaten or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup egg substitute

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup light corn syrup

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup sugar

2 teaspoons margarine or butter, melted

1 teaspoon vanilla

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup pecan halves, chopped

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped dates

12 (3-inch) graham cracker tart crusts

12 pecan halves

Combine eggs, corn syrup, sugar, margarine and vanilla in bowl until blended. Stir in chopped pecans and dates. Pour filling evenly into tart crusts. Place crusts on baking sheet. Bake at 375° for 15 to 20 minutes or until filling is just set. Cool completely on wire rack. Makes 12 servings. □

# Photo TipS

By Lynda Richardson

## Front Line Filters

"I'm almost there," I groaned, heaving my aging body higher up a channel marker in the middle of the York River. Dr. Mitchell Byrd watched from below. Holding a rope wrapped to keep his boston whaler close beneath me, he continued to observe the spectacle I was making of myself. "Are you sure about that," he commented as a dangling camera slid down my shoulder and smashed lense first into the large post.

Reaching the top, I pulled the camera up to check for damage. Three slight half inch scratches grazed the expensive glass on the front of the lens. It could have been worse. Deep scratches or dents might have made the lens unuseable and repairing such damage could sometimes cost more than the lens itself.

Smart photographers protect the front element of their valuable lenses with filters. When it comes to replacing a filter or a lense, you can bet that the filter is the least expensive route to take. I recommend purchasing ultra-violet filters for all of your lenses. These filters are usually colorless though some have a slight yellow cast. Not only will the filters protect the lens from damage, dust, moisture and finger prints but they also will absorb some of the invisible ultra-violet rays that cause a blue cast on color film in distant views and mountain scenes.

Easily screw mounted to the front of a lense, filters come in various sizes according to the diameter of the frontal glass element. My old CANON lenses, such as the 24mm, 35mm and 50mm take 55mm filters

while the newer versions take 52mm filters. My 17mm and 200mm are protected with 72mm filters. If you have any question as to the size of a filter for your lense, simply take the lense to be fitted to your local camera shop.



*I should have known better than to climb this channel marker without a protective UV filter on the front of my 24mm lens, especially considering all the sticks I had to work around. A very patient Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd records the egg count from this osprey nest as I snap off a few frames with my scratched lens. Photo by Lynda Richardson.*

Filters can range in price from \$10 to \$300 depending on size and quality. I recommend buying the best filters you can afford if sharp photographs are your end result. Imagine spending \$1400 for a top of the line, sharp lens and placing a \$10 fil-

ter on the front of it. How will this cheap filter take away from the quality of your photographs?

As the beautiful spring weather draws you into the great outdoors, please remember your lense's front line of defense. A UV filter can give you piece of mind and is a whole lot easier to replace than a lense.

## "News You Can Use"

The North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) has three accessible presences in the on-line community: America Online, CompuServe, and a web page on the Internet.

To find NANPA's representative, Dr. Ellen Rudolph, on American Online, contact her directly at [drellen@aol.com](mailto:drellen@aol.com) or check out the Kodak Nature Photography section.

To find NANPA on CompuServe, just GO NANPA and it will take you to the Photography Forum where NANPA has its own section—open to the public, along with a library containing lots of reference files and information.

On the Internet, the official NANPA web page address is: <http://www.mcs.net/~rjacobs/nanpa.htm>. The site is currently used as an information resource about the organization. Later on, a list of nature photography resources, mostly educational, and how to contact wildlife refuges and other nature locations will be added, courtesy of the NANPA Environmental Committee.



# Celebrate National Fishing Week

## Enter the Kids-N-Fishing Photo Contest

"Picture it!" The excitement of fishing on a child's face that is. Then enter your photo in the Kids-N-Fishing Photo Contest sponsored by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Richmond Camera. Three of the young anglers in those photographs will be chosen to receive prizes.

No need to be a  
professional  
photographer.  
A snapshot will do!

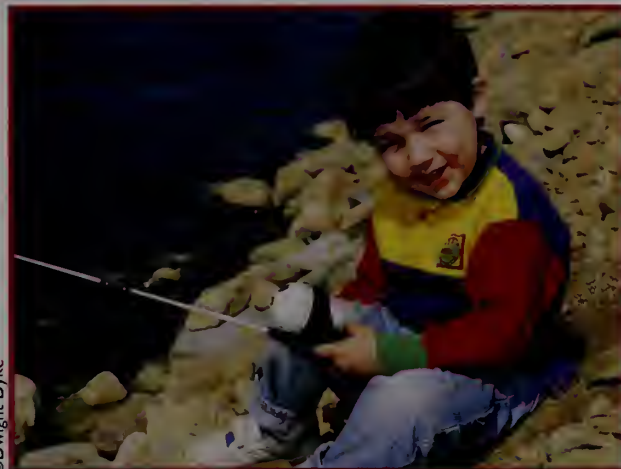
Winning photographs  
will be those that best  
capture the theme  
"kids enjoying fishing."

**First prize:** a \$100 savings bond, (courtesy of Richmond Camera), a rod and reel and a Beginning Angler Education Kit.

**Richmond  
Camera**



©Dwight Dyke



©Dwight Dyke

**Second prize:** a rod and reel and a Beginning Angler Education Kit

**Third prize:** a Beginning Angler Education Kit

**Contest rules:** Children must be between 5 and 12 years old. Photographs must be submitted by May 31, 1997. Judging will take place during National Fishing Week, June 2-8. The name and address of the child must accompany the photograph. Prizes will be sent direct to the winning children. Photos will not be returned and may be used in other VDGIF promotional materials.

**To enter:** Send a photo with the child's name and address to:

Virginia Department of  
Game and Inland Fisheries  
c/o Anne Skalski,  
Photo Contest  
4010 West Broad St.  
Richmond, VA 23230-1104

# National Fishing Week

June 2-8

